UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM  
Honors Committee Meeting 
331st Meeting  
September 5, 2014  
1:30-3:30 PM, CLB 110

I. Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members  
   A. Faculty Members  
   B. Student Members  

II. Election of the Committee’s Faculty Chair  

III. Approval of Agenda  

IV. Approval of Minutes from April 2014  

V. Staff Reports  
   A. Associate Vice Provost for University Honors  
   B. Assistant Director of Academics and Advising  
   C. Assistant Director of Programming and Communication  
   D. Assistant to the Associate Vice Provost for University Honors  

VI. Additional Reports & Updates  

VII. Old Business  
   A. Honors Faculty status  
   B. Assessment Plan for University Honors  

VIII. New Business  
   A. Spring 15 Course Approval  
   B. Revised Honors Admission Criteria  
   C. Alumni of the Year Award  
   D. Honors Faculty Fall Workshop  
   E. HONS Course Designation Proposal  
   F. EYE Grants  
   G. Course Enrichment Requests  
   H. Walk-on items  

IX. Adjourn  

The next meeting is Friday, October 3
Honors Committee Meeting
331st Meeting

September 5, 2014

(APPROVED)

Voting Members Present: Scott Balcerzak (LAS), Pat Braun (HHS); Dave Changnon (LAS), Nicholas Pohlman (CEET), John Evar Strid (EDUC), Sarah McHone-Chase (LIB), Tim Pierce (LAS), Bart Sharp (BUSE), Masih Shokrani (UCC/HHS), and Honors students Ken Barnett, Katie Derius, Jeff Kamholz, and Jack Sauter

Voting Members Absent: Rebecca Houze (VPA) and Honors student Faith Young.

Ex-officio present: J. D. Bowers (Honors)

Ex-officio absent: Michael Kolb (Vice Provost)

Others: Dave Ballantine (Honors House faculty advisor) and Honors staff Jes Cisneros, Sandra Dawson, Joanne Ganshirt (Recording Clerk), and Jason Goode

I. Welcome and Introduction of Committee Members
Sharp opened the meeting as chair from the previous year. He welcomed all members to a new year. Faculty members, student members, and Honors staff introduced themselves.

II. Election of the Committee’s Faculty Chair
Strid/Changnon nominated Sharp to continue as chair. The motion passed by unanimous acclamation.

III. Approval of Agenda
Balcerzak/Braun moved to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed.

IV. Approval of Minutes from April 2014
Braun/Changnon moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

V. Staff Reports

A. Associate Vice Provost for University Honors
Bowers presented the following report:

1. Review of Enrollment Numbers
   Bowers reported the enrollment numbers for incoming freshmen was down a little from last year. The number of new transfer students is also down. The numbers for community college transfers are down across the board and this is catching up to the Honors Program.
Bowers presented all the enrollment numbers for the new academic year (see below). A list of the numbers enrolled using new cohorts in CHANCE, veterans, athletes, and scholarship winners was also presented. Retention at NIU was better than expected.

Cisneros noted that last year’s new freshmen enrollment was the highest ever. Changnon asked the retention rate of those students. A report will be forthcoming.

2. Fiscal
Bowers told the committee that the Honors Program had a budget for the first time in several years. In the past, there was a basic budget, but what was spent was covered even if it was over the budget amount. There is now a set budget and if the Honors Program overspends that amount will be taken from the following year’s budget. Money that was supposed to be in the budget does not appear to be there. There was $100,000 permanently put in the budget. This is down $40,000 from last year and a temporary $60,000 will be removed next year.

A fee to participate in the Honors Program is being considered. The issue will come before the committee. This year, the fee for the Taft Retreat was $95 and that made the retreat solvent. There was some money lost because transportation costs were higher than expected because there are not enough campus bus drivers and so buses had to be hired from off campus.

Bowers has been told to raise money for the program. A senior class gift is in the works. Honors students Joe Palmer and Karissa Kessen are working with the Foundation to get this established. The NIU Call Center has been getting some good donations for the program. Bowers is working on establishing a younger cohort of givers. There is one year left on the $50,000 Rachowicz pledge.

The Honors Program has lost the Maibach donations through no fault of ours. There are no scholarships available and there will be no lecture series. The scholarships had been awarded before it was known the money had been lost. The Foundation is covering those awards.

Changnon said he is in favor of having a fee. Derius was concerned this may turn off some students. Balscerzak asked what other universities do. Bowers said most have a fee. Kamholz said he would pay the fee because he knows the value added by the Honors Program. Derius suggested that a charge could be made for the Taft Retreat then start the charging the participation the second semester. (This would apply only to incoming freshmen and transfer students who attend Taft.) Sharp said he understands the state of the State of Illinois and how much the Honors Program has to give. He wants students to attend NIU and join the program but is afraid the services and courses they want will not able to be offered. Bowers said he will come back with different models for input at this matter must go through the Board of Trustees.

3. Honors Criteria
The current admission criterion for incoming freshmen is a 27 ACT and the top 10% of the class. Bowers said he is endorsing a change to 27 ACT or top 10% of the class or a 3.75 GPA. This will align Honors Program criterion with the new
admission and scholarship criteria as endorsed by the president and Scholarships Committee. The president is pushing to limit the use of ACT scores across campus. This is not out of step with many schools.

4. Honors staffing
Bowers told the committee Dawson is a history instructor who is currently working temporarily as the assistant director for programming. He is hoping to be able to do a search for a permanent position. He is also trying to get the title changed on Goode’s position. Until the assistant director for programming position is filled Bowers is working the Honors House.

The Honors Program will not being a search for the program advisor position or a new advisor to assist Cisneros with advising Honors students. Max Hoover, from the NIU Writing Center will be working in the Honors office on Mondays from 10:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. to assist students with writing in all forms.

5. Curriculum
This issue was tabled until the next meeting.

6. Study/Study US Program Reports
Braun asked about study abroad programs and how they will be affected by the change of duties for Bowers. Bowers said he is obligated by contract to teach one Honors per year. He is using the study abroad course as a way to meet this obligation. There is some question about how much the other programs have become part of his job.

Bowers wants someone to lead Chinese program. He cannot do it at this time so he is looking for someone else to be the leader of the program. The Mendoza program is exciting and everyone wants to go to the 1-hour wine course. He does not see a reason for the Honors Program to step back from study abroad. The Ghana trip did not happen this summer because of health issues in Africa.

Kamholz asked if the China trip was for only Honors or anyone could participate. Bowers said it is open to everyone at a cost $1,000 for four weeks. Dawson asked why there was no interest in the program. Bowers explained by the time it was organized students had made other plans. He said he couldn’t say if there was only issue. There may have been a confluence of many factors. The Division of International Studies was paying the faculty leader and had supported the students so much it brought the cost to them to $1,000. Initially, 35 students attend the informational meeting. Only three continued to show interest but none of them completed the application process. Students would have received six credit hours for the $1,000 cost. Bowers added he was not the faculty organizer for this and should not have had to do any of the work.

7. Community College Outreach
Bowers is working with Paul Crawford, director of Outreach and Engagement on this initiative. The Honors Program continues to offer graduates of the Kishwaukee College and Highland Community College Honors Program the opportunity to apply for one of two Honors Fellow position allocated for them. If the students complete an approve Honors Program at the community and then
complete upper division honors requirements at NIU, they will receive University Honors. These opportunities will be offered to other community college transfer students if they are successful.

8. Honors Partnerships
The University Honors Program is a supporting partner of the following student initiatives:

- **H2O To Go project**—Honors student Josh Nixon is leading this initiative. Waters bottles have distributed across campus as a means of educating about waste. The Honors Program has put informational posters in the office, promoted it both the Taft Retreat and the Welcome Barbecue, and will sponsor part of the cost of a hydration station in the Campus Life Building.
- **Ted-X NIU**—The Honors Program will co-sponsor and fund the annual Ted-X NIU Project. An Honors representative and students will attend the Ted Conference in Whistler in March 2015. The Honors Program will pay all airfare.
- **CAUSE**—The Honors Program waiting to hear what this organization wants to do.

9. Honors Events/Activities
An evaluation of all events offered by the Honors Program will be done. The events will be prioritized as those to keep as is, keep but change (decrease costs, decrease frequency, change design, and/or obtain new funding stream, and those to drop completely. Currently, the frequency of SOUPer Wednesday has been cut from weekly to six times a semester. Housing and Dining and the Alumni Association will pay for two each. Honors will pay for the rest and include campus partners.

10. Retention Report
Following is a list of the Honors Program is currently doing to increase retention:

- Membership in the Advising Dean’s Retention Group and active collaborations with HIP programs and office across campus.
- A mandatory Peer Mentor program for all first-year freshmen and transfer students.
- Freshman/First-Year (mandatory) Taft Retreat (a two-day retreat about how to flourish in University Honors and at NIU)
- Required participation in MAPWorks for all new students.
- E-files for student advising and for easier/immediate access by all University Honors professional staff.
- Increasing amount and number of scholarships and tuition waivers for returning students (sophomores and above).
- More than 40 co-curricular or extra-curricular/social events a year, with students required to attend at least two to remain active in the program.
There may be other events we would classify as retention efforts, but are not specifically cited here. Nonetheless, the Honors Program staff, with great intentions, is trying to sustain contact with students and make the one-on-one connections that research has proven to be the foundation of a student’s positive experience and lasting connections to a university.

11. Works in Progress

The following are continuing to be developed:

- Rovertown—The contracts have been forwarded to the General Counsel’s Office and to Communications and Marketing.
- Food Truck—Bowers will attend a meeting next week to review the idea. Honors students would run the truck, handle the marketing, and other operational needs. Proceeds would be split with 50% going to Honors Scholarships and 50% to general scholarships. There is currently an alumni group working on a food truck as well.
- The Hague—A new strand for Water and STEM-base with Dr. Jon Miller will be added. The Hague is a good place for that area of study. Both groups would travel together to The Hague and then have separate agendas from there.

Bowers is also working on student and faculty handbooks for the Honors Program. He is also working with MAPWorks for the new students. He, Cisneros and Goode are also taking part in class attendance reports. Students on the non-attendance list are being sent e-mails and then follow-up phone calls are made.

There is an initiative being considered for an Honors-early college. This initiative would offer seven college credits for summer courses taken by high school juniors. The courses could be used at any college but will be offered under the HONS imprint.

| INCOMING FRESHMEN ACT/CLASS RANK MEAN SCORES (196 New Freshmen) |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Mean ACT                  | 27    | 27.6 | 28   | 28   | 26.78| 28.52| 27.77| 28.4 | 29.1 | 28.47| 28.81|
| Mean Rank                 | 89.8  | 88.9 | 86.9 | 89   | 85.46| 86.8 | 86.21| 81.26| 87.6 | 88.95| 87.6 |
| GPA                       |       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | 3.89 |

| INCOMING TRANSFER MEAN GPA (100 New Transfers) |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Transfer GPA                                | 3.69  | 3.69 | 3.74 | 3.64 | 3.69 | 3.69 | 3.69 | 3.75 | 3.66 | 3.62 | 3.68 |

| ENROLLMENT BY PART OF PROGRAM                |
|---------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| LDH                                         | 593   | 716   | 571  | 467  | 409  | 373  | 480  | 492  | 577  | 569  | 675  |
| UDH                                         | 417   | 508   | 395  | 385  | 385  | 325  | 381  | 492  | 506  | 494  | 470  |
| Total                                       | 1010  | 1224  | 966  | 852  | 794  | 698  | 861  | 984  | 1083 | 1063 | 1145 |
# Enrollment by Major College

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# Enrollment by Ethnicity

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# Enrollment by Gender

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# Enrollment in Lower Division Honors by Major College

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# Enrollment in Upper Division Honors by Major College

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# Spring and Summer 2014 Honors Graduates by College

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13 CHANCE Students
19 Athletes
11 Veterans
719 Scholarship recipients
(63%) 

B. Assistant Director for Advising
Cisneros presented the following report:

- He has trained the Honors Fellows to advise members of the Honors Program.
- During summer orientation he worked at Northern Neighborhood and did presentations to parents.
- He helped plan and participated in the annual Freshman Taft Retreat. He trained all the Honors Fellows to be leaders at Taft. For the first time, transfers students were included in the second session. About a dozen transfer students attended. It was a hard to get transfer students to see the value in attending.
- He attended an institute on assessment hosted by the National Collegiate Honors Council. He is currently working on an assessment plan for the Honors Program. He is working across campus on this project. There is a need to tighten up some of the outcomes. As the program evolves and launches new initiatives the domains may change.
- He attended MAPWorks training.
- He worked at Welcome Days events as needed.
- He attended the Honors Program Welcome Barbecue, which was a success.
- The Honors Student Association has kicked of successfully. Cisneros is the advisor. The association is trying to get more students involved and use it as a way to get information to the Honors Program staff.
- He has also been involved with Student Involvement Fair, participated in a search committee, and is reaching out to students who are not enrolled in an Honors course this semester.
- Today (September 5) is the deadline for submitting in-course contracts.

C. Acting Assistant Director for Programming
Dawson, who was completing her first week, reported she has been working systematically and chronologically through the program that have been set up this semester. She is working with Honors students Diana Alday and Lexie Williams on the Social Justice Conference. She is currently working on getting funding for the conference.

She has also started to work with Honors Fellows on various other programs.

D. Assistant to the Associate Vice Provost
Goode presented the following report:
1. McKearn Scholars
   a. Faculty mentor orientation
   b. Lunch meetings with fellows
   c. Arts Club
   d. BBQ at Anne Birberick’s house
   e. Dinner at President Baker’s house
   f. Kishwaukee Health Systems trip
   g. Weekly summer research program meetings
   h. Summer Research Symposium (McKearn & 1 Honors Scholar)

2. Honors Scholars
   a. Mentor orientation
   b. Blogs
   c. Five-page reflection paper and Capstone Proposal

3. Honors Tuition Waivers (unused funds)
   a. Helped six students with outstanding balances
   b. Working with Foundation to get the ACT requirement removed from Kovacevich Scholarship requirements

4. Campus visit presentation
   a. Presentation with Roxana Moraga (Honors Fellow) for a group of Latino H.S. students.
   b. Renaissance Gifted Academy Office, Thurgood Marshall School, Rockford, IL visit included a Campus tour, UHP visit, Honors Presentation by Dr. C. Admissions presentation, museum visit, lunch in Blackhawk, and shopping in the HSC Bookstore.

5. Website
   a. McKearn www.niu.edu/mckearn

6. Chinese Delegation
   a. Attended the dinners and BBQ’s designed to make them feel at home

7. Hazing Prevention Taskforce (Coordinated by SILD)
   a. Hazing Prevention Week September 22-26th

8. Scholarship Workshop
   a. Rhodes, Gates, Marshall, & Truman (July session facilitated by Thomas Bouril)

9. Mortar Board co-advisor
   a. Help guide them to ensure reports, dues, and financial forms are submitted
   b. Assisted with graduation flower sales

10. Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce
    a. List activities on campus for minorities who are SPS or Civil Service

11. Student Success Collaborative
    a. System designed by EAB (Education Advisory Board) Program that would help students find out what major they might consider or if want to change major which would use most of the requirements from the previous.
12.  Summer Open House  
   a. Staff table and speak with perspective students and their families about the Honors program.

13.  Fellow Training  
   a. Best practices, expectations, and the role of the fellow in Honors

14.  Taft  
   a. Presentation on Scholarships, tuition waivers, and national scholarships

VI.  Additional Reports and Updates  
There were no additional reports. Student members were encouraged to bring items to agenda.

VII.  Old Business

   A. Honors Faculty Status  
      Bowers reported the Undergraduate Coordinating Council has the minutes from the meeting at which this was approved by the Honors Committee. He said formal instruments need to be developed. A list of faculty needs to be created and the required criteria for each checked as completed. How should this move forward?

   B. Assessment Plan for University Honors  
      This was discussed during Cisneros’ report.

VIII. New Business

   A. Spring 15 Course Approval  
      Bowers said too many course proposals had been received for the funds available. He presented a list of those courses to the committee and asked for reactions and/or opinions on the funding. He explained when a department offers more than one course at least one is asked to be offered on load. Currently, there are 14 proposals, worth $70,000, at $5,000 per course. This is over the $45,000 available budget. Trends show that two of the courses will not get enough enrollment to be offered meaning three proposals will have to be turned down. Changnon asked if someone who has not taught before should be allowed to develop a course. Even with some issues with having to be cancelled the Honors Program does not want lose the faculty members who support the program.

      Sharp said those classes with historically low enrollments could be the ones that are eliminated. Pierce suggested looking at those faculty members who have been given overloads in the recent past and maybe eliminate them. This would bring more people into the faculty status system. Sharp said the committee and program need to be sure the students are being served. He again suggested eliminating those courses that typically don’t enroll and then look at other criteria.

      Further discussion was held and several courses were eliminated.
B. Revised Honors Admission Criteria
   This was discussed during Bowers’ report.

C. Alumni of the Year Award
   Student members identified potential candidates during the spring semester. Sharp and
   Pohlmans looked through those identified and contacted five. Sharp said responses have
   been received from two of those contacted with a third expected. He said all the
   candidates were very impressive. A recipient should be able to be selected at the next
   meeting. Bowers said we will probably have to restructure the award ceremony as the
   Alumni Association will probably not be hosting mentor dinners. The mentor dinner was
   the venue through which the award was given. He said the award may be done at Honors
   Day or some other Honors event. Sharp added that part of the requirement for the
   recipient would be to come back to campus to speak with Honors students to reconnect
   with the Honors Program.

D. Honors Faculty Fall Workshop
   Bowers asked committee members when the workshop should be held and what should
   be discussed. He is taking suggestions. Sharp asked if the Honors Faculty status will be
   resolved this semester. If so, the workshop may want to be delayed until later in the
   semester. Shokrani said he thinks the workshop should be offered twice on different days
   or in the evening to allow more faculty to attend. Bowers said this item will be moved to
   old business at the next meeting, but asked committee members to design what should be
   done at the workshop. Changnon suggested including ethical leadership in this
   workshop. Shokrani, Changnon, Pierce and Derius volunteered to form a working group
   to plan the workshop.

E. HONS Course Designation Proposal
   Bowers said he was looking for a committee to look at a draft proposal. The proposal
   will need to be passed by the Honors Committee before moving forward to other
   committees. The McKearn Scholars Program has promised participants unique courses.
   Pohlmans and Sharp volunteered to look at the draft. Changnon suggested Ballantine may
   want to look at it as well.

F. EYE Grants
   Discussions of Eye Grant requests were deferred to a later meeting. The committee
   wants to stay with the schedule used in past years.

G. Course Enrichment Requests
   This item was not discussed.

H. Walk-on Items
   There were no walk-on items.

IX. Adjournment
Pohlman/Shokrani moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:30 p.m. The motion passed. The next meeting will be Friday, October 3 at 1:30 p.m.